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October 31, 1995

Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, DC 20054

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

RE: CC Docket No. 95-155--Fair and Efficient Use of Toll Free Numbers

Please find attached the original and requisite copies of comments by Charter Medical Corporation to be filed in the above referenced docket.

If there are any questions regarding this matter, please feel free to contact the undersigned.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John V. Kenny".

John V. Kenny
President/Chief Operating Officer

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Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

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JUN 01 1995

In the Matter of)
Toll Free Services Access Codes) CC Docket No. 95-155

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COMMENTS OF CHARTER MEDICAL CORPORATION

Charter Medical Corporation, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, hereby files its comments in the above referenced notice of proposed rulemaking.

Charter Medical Corporation

Charter Medical Corporation is an international healthcare provider specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of addictive diseases and psychiatric disorders. Charter, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, owns and operates over 100 healthcare facilities in the United States and Europe and manages facilities in Puerto Rico.

Founded in 1969, Charter Medical has helped shape the delivery of mental and substance abuse healthcare in the United States and abroad as the largest private behavioral healthcare system in America. For more than two decades, Charter has helped hundreds of thousands of patients and families obtain high-quality behavioral healthcare through its integrated delivery systems of care.

The Mental Illness Problem

The impact of mental illness on our society is staggering. Millions of adults will suffer from a major mental health disorder in their lifetime. At any given time, over 20% of our adult population could benefit from clinical intervention; yet only 1/5 of those will seek treatment.

Over six million Americans suffer from a more severe mental illness diagnosis:

Schizophrenia - 3 million;
Manic depression - 2.2 million; and
Panic disorder - 1 million.

The annual costs to the United States economy through lost productivity, lost earnings and premature death from mental health problems total \$75 billion, and costs related to alcohol and drug abuse reach \$155 billion per year.

1-800-CHARTER

The 1-800-Charter number was initiated by Charter Medical in 1993 with the intent of providing a convenient and easy way for individuals to access help during an emotional crisis. The mnemonic number was found to be more easily remembered and called to mind readily in a crisis situation. Charter Medical has trained clinical staff in all of its locations available to take calls through the 1-800-CHARTER system 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, offering free clinical assessments and referral to the most appropriate treatment options. Each facility has a variety of services as well as working relationships with many other community resources. In fact, more than 75% of all callers are referred to local community services outside of the Charter array of treatment programs. Charter truly functions as a community referral service.

When individuals in need dial 1-800-CHARTER, the call is routed to the closest Charter facility or call center, depending upon the time of day and day of week. How, when, and where the calls are routed is controlled directly by the Corporate office via a remote workstation. The workstation is used to develop and implement call routing plans and to re-route calls during local disasters.

1-888-CHARTER

Through the 1-800-CHARTER System, Charter now services nearly one million calls annually. This volume has increased steadily since the initial promotion of the 1-800-CHARTER number in 1993. With ongoing advertising and community education messages that Charter provides nationwide, the 1-800-CHARTER number is emphasized to make it easier for individuals and their families to seek help for mental health issues. Charter Medical is pursuing the new toll free exchange 1-888-CHARTER to continue to serve the millions of Americans in need of mental health treatment.

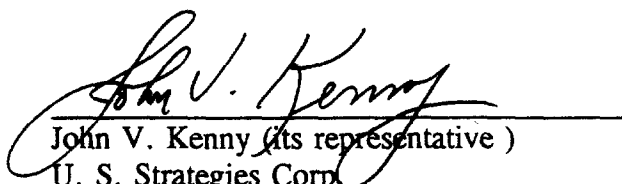
In the near future the 888 exchange will be as widely known and utilized as the 800 number is today. We anticipate that dialing 888 versus 800 would be a very easy error to make, particularly when people are distraught, confused, or suicidal due to an emotional or chemical abuse crisis. It is for this reason that Charter Medical believes that for the benefit of individuals in need, it will be important to have both 1-800-CHARTER and 1-888-CHARTER.

The statistics speak for themselves. The need for quality mental health access is clear. In order for Charter Medical to maintain the level of service to communities throughout the nation, we need to be clearly identified as a source of help. Through the national toll free system of 800 and 888, Charter could continue to provide access to the millions of Americans who need help for mental health and substance abuse issues.

Conclusion

Charter believes that it is in the public interest to enact rules covering toll free service access codes which guarantee those entities which provide needed public services to retain their toll free numbers and utilize the same three digit central office code (NXX) and the same four digit line number (XXXX0 as new three digit numbering plan or area codes are developed. We respectfully recommend that the FCC enact such rules to promote the efficient use of toll free numbers which would promote fair and equitable servation and distribution of the same.

Respectfully submitted Charter Medical Corporation
by;


John V. Kenny (its representative)
U. S. Strategies Corp
President/Chief Operating Officer
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